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BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN
PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER IX. SPLEEN INJURIA FORME.

THE revelation which Mrs. Entwistle made to Gerald Hardinge of the relationship in which she stood towards him, was as gratifying as it was unexpected. For not merely was he fond of the woman to whom he owed his pleasant position in life, with that real affection which springing from gratitude is one of the purest of human passions, but, worldly philosopher as he was, he found in the announcement a balm for certain stings of conscience which had occasionally pricked him.

The fact was, that of late there had risen in Gerald Hardinge's mind a doubt whether the easy and luxurious life he was then leading, provided for by the kindness of one upon whom he had no claim of kinship, was either an honourable or a desirable one. It was all very well at first, when the circumstances of the position were widely different. Then, smarting under a sense of degradation at his treatment by Madge Pierrepont, he had cared little what became of him; and when he found that the patron by whom his earliest pictures were bought, and to whom the London agent introduced him immediately on his arrival, was an old lady instead of an old gentleman, as he had been led to believe, he felt it mattered but little for whom he worked, so long as he obtained adequate remuneration. The use to which the money thus acquired was to be put, varied according to his temperament. At one time he determined to spend it in searching for Madge and inducing her to reconsider her

cruel determination; at another he would decide to finally abandon any further thought of his quondam sweetheart, and only hope that some day, seeing him in his glory, she might be able to form some idea of what she had lost by her treacherous conduct.

Then came the time when taking up his abode in Mrs. Entwistle's house (temporarily, as it was understood, for the purpose of elaborating some drawings under her personal superintendence), he gradually suffered Madge to fade out of his thoughts, and becoming by degrees accustomed to his new life, taught himself the facile creed, that Art is a coy goddess, declining to appear whenever she may be invoked, and only rendering herself visible at certain times and seasons, not to be calculated upon beforehand. This meant, of course, nothing more nor less than that being brought into constant contact with nothing-doing people, with time and money at their disposal, Gerald had become inoculated with the charm of the lives they led, and that he only resorted to his canvas and brushes in default of more pleasant pastime. In this idleness he was encouraged by Mrs. Entwistle, who gradually inducted him into the position of her representative during her lifetime, her heir after her death, and by the examples of his companions, who could not understand any other mode of life than that which they led.

Nevertheless, from time to time a feeling of shame crept over him as he remembered how actively he had been engaged at his outset in life, when his very existence depended on his own exertions, and when he contrasted the hard-won independence of those days with the purposeless and easy life which he now led. And so far had those

feelings wrought upon him, that he had come to a resolution, the first-fruits of which were visible in his remonstrance with Mrs. Entwistle, against her declared intention of leaving him all her property.

A naturally indolent young man, who has for some time been accustomed to have all his wishes fulfilled without any cost or trouble to himself, is, however, a bad subject for self-reform, and it is probable that Gerald Hardinge would have salved his conscience with the fact of his kinship to his benefactor being sufficient excuse for his position in her house, had not his mind been entirely taken up with another subject springing out of the same revelation. His mother! Here at last was an opportunity for which he had sought so often when first driven from his father's roof, but which of late years he had completely forgotten, of endeavouring to learn the history of his mother's early married life, and of ridding her memory of the stigma attached to it by his father. That, if it could be carried out, would be something, indeed, to live for, and Gerald determined on learning how far Mrs. Entwistle could help him in his research on the first available opportunity.

On the morning of the day after that on which he dined with Doctor Asprey, Gerald went for his usual ride, and asking on his return after Mrs. Entwistle, was surprised to learn that she had risen, and had been wheeled into the boudoir, according to her usual custom.

"She had been perfectly quiet through the night," Willis observed, and declared "that she felt no worse than usual from the sharp attack on the previous evening." In her boudoir, at the window overlooking the park, Gerald found her. Her back was towards the door, but she recognised his footstep at once, and there was a smile on her face as he stooped down to kiss her forehead.

"You are none the worse for last night's attack, Willis tells me," said Gerald, tenderly.

"By some extraordinary and inexplicable accident, Willis is right," said Mrs. Entwistle; "either my system is becoming so accustomed to attacks that I am beginning to thrive upon them, as some persons are said to do upon poisons, or what would have been the ill effects of the shock last night were counteracted by the excessive amount of amusement which I experienced."

"Amusement?"

"Amusement, and created by you, or rather by the conversation which we had. I cannot imagine anything more utterly ridiculous, except upon the stage, than our talk last evening and its climax, though I am afraid I spoiled the effect of that by my unfortunate want of strength! I ought to have risen from the sofa, and flinging my arms open for you to rush into, exclaimed, 'Behold your long lost aunt!' But there is something in the very name and character of 'aunt,' which would render any attempt at romance impossible in the most determined heroine, to say nothing of such a very matter-of-fact person as myself."

"I am glad you were amused," said Gerald, quietly. "You had the advantage, you see, of being acquainted with all the hidden mystery, and of enjoying my surprise at its announcement. For my own part my feelings were not entirely of an amused character."

"You surely did not find anything to be sentimental over in the discovery of your aunt?" said Mrs. Entwistle, looking at him maliciously.

"No," replied Gerald, "but my aunt, if you recollect, spoke of my mother."

"Ah, you were fond of your mother, I believe?"

"Fond of her," echoed Gerald; "she was your sister, you say? Were you not fond of her?"

"No," said Mrs. Entwistle, quietly. "At one time, yes; but for many years before her death, certainly not. Fondness for people is a mistake which one grows out of in years; the last person I was fond of was myself, but that delusion died away long since."

"And yet you are fond of me?" said Gerald.

"A weakness of old age, my dear," said Mrs. Entwistle, "and one which, having so few, I can afford to encourage."

Gerald noticed and appreciated the tones in which these words were uttered.

"It seems to me so strange that any one could have disliked my mother," said he, half unconsciously.

"I didn't positively dislike her," said Mrs. Entwistle. "My feelings towards her were of a negative character. I didn't like her, and I had my reasons!"

"From what you said last night, you must also have had your reasons for disliking my father!"

"I had my reasons for hating your father!" said Mrs. Entwistle, with sudden energy, "and I have them still. There

was never much of the angel in my composition, but what little there was, he obliterated. What I might have been had I not met Geoffry Heriot, I know not; but that I am as I am, cynical, hard, unfor-giving, and unbelieving, is his work!"

" You still continue to make me half-confidences," said Gerald; " to speak to me of results without explaining the causes. Why not tell me about my father and yourself in early life, and the story of what he did to make you hate him so cordially?"

" You are afflicted with an insatiable curiosity, my dear Gerald, and, after my announcement to you of last evening, seem to look upon me as a kind of mystery-monger, with constantly startling surprises in store. As you are pleased to ask for a story, I do not know that mine would satisfy you: it would be merely the narration of a sufficiently ordinary set of incidents, with perhaps a somewhat uncommon dénouement (that I think is the correct word), and I must again apologise for my weakness, which prevents my pulling my chair and sitting down close by you in the true dramatic manner."

" If the story, or whatever you choose to call it, concerns my mother, it is sure to have interest for me," said Gerald, earnestly, purposely ignoring the latter portion of Mrs. Entwistle's speech.

" It concerns your father more than your mother," said Mrs. Entwistle; " but I think you will find that, like most persons who get an opportunity of narration, I make myself the principal heroine of the adventures. Why I permitted any further reference to the subject at all," she added, after a pause, " I cannot understand, except it is that you seem interested, and it may be as well to let the real facts of the case be known while I am capable of stating them; but please let it be perfectly understood, that this is nothing in the light of a death-bed confession, or, indeed, of a repentance of any kind. What I did was done with my eyes open, and I am not sure that it would not be repeated exactly in the same way, under similar circumstances."

Gerald marked her rising colour and flashing eyes.

" Will not the excitement of talking be too much for you?" he said, bending over her, and taking her hand.

" No," she replied, with a half-laugh; " you have brought it upon yourself, and must now go through with it. Only I should like my hand to remain in yours while you listen to me."

" You were too young during your mother's lifetime to have understood anything about this, even if she had chosen to tell you; so I will begin at the beginning. She and I were the only children of a man high up in one of the government offices. Our mother died when we were quite little tots (there was but a year's difference between my sister and myself), and my only recollection of her is in connexion with a big oil-painting, where she was represented looking on in simpering delight at her children gambolling with a big black retriever dog, while her husband loaded a gun in the background. All this, with the exception of the black dog, was the result of pure imagination on the part of the artist. Our mother never had health enough to look after us in our play-time, and our father certainly never loaded or fired a gun in his life. He was a small, studious man of a scientific turn, who cordially hated his official work, save for the money which it brought to him, and who passed all his leisure in making chemical experiments.

" Nor do I remember that there was ever the amount of affection between your mother and myself, indicated by the entwined arms and loving glances in the family portrait. At the time of the execution of that wonderful work of art, we were both plain children, though of a different plainness. Your mother's hair was light, her features heavy, her figure squat and clumsy, whereas my hair was black, my complexion sallow, and my limbs thin and ungainly. We had but little in common even then; she was sluggish and apathetic, I impulsive and intolerant. As we grew up together, our characters remained pretty much as they had been, but as regards outward appearance, not merely did each improve wonderfully, but there was found to be a great amount of similarity between us. We were exactly of the same height; my figure had filled out until it closely resembled your mother's; our walk, our mode of carrying ourselves, our accustomed gestures, were exactly the same; we usually dressed alike, and the general resemblance, even to the voices, was so great, that to tell which was Miss Emma and which Miss Florence, was pronounced impossible, unless our faces were plainly visible.

" When we were respectively seventeen and eighteen years old our father died, leaving just enough to keep us and no more, and recommending us to the tender

mercy of his sister, a maiden lady, who lived at Stonechester. She was a pleasant, kindly old woman, and accepted the charge thus bequeathed to her in the most affectionate spirit, although the addition of two young women to her modest little household must have greatly deranged her comfort. Miss Hastings was highly thought of in the cathedral society to which her nieces were at first voted a charming addition. I am bound to say that your mother always retained the good opinion of these humdrum folk, which, for my part, I speedily lost; I used to quiz the canons, and curates, and all the rest of them, and flirted unmercifully with the military men who occasionally drifted into our midst from Chatham and Brompton barracks.

"One night, I recollect it as well as if it were yesterday, there was a little musical party at the Deanery. At first I did not intend to go, thinking it would be dull and prosy; but I was over-persuaded, and I went. We were a little late, and on our arrival found that the singing had already commenced. A man's voice, strange to me then, but from that hour never forgotten, was sighing forth the last notes of Edgar Ravenswood's farewell to his lost love. We stood spell-bound. I have heard this air sung by all the great tenors of my time, better and more accurately sung, doubtless, but never with the same effect. The voice we listened to then was low and clear, but its speciality was the wonderfully sympathetic quality of its tones; the heart-broken despair trembling in every note of the lover's wail. When the air was concluded there was a burst of applause, unusually loud for that decorous assemblage; and as we entered the room I saw the hostess warmly congratulating a gentleman, whom I rightly imagined to be the singer.

"There was nothing particularly remarkable in his appearance, save that he wore a moustache, or, as it was then called, "a pair of moustachios," an ornament rarely cultivated by Englishmen. He was of average height, with dark eyes and flowing dark hair; a trim figure and dainty hands and feet. His age must have been about eight-and-thirty, for though considerably younger than the dean, of whom he was some distant connexion, he had been for a short time contemporary with him both at Harrow and Cambridge. Since his university days Mr. Yeldham, that was his name, had principally resided abroad, having an independence of his own, and being devoted

to music and painting, both of which arts he practised as an amateur. After a little time he was asked to sing again, and I was introduced to him to act as his accompanist. This time choosing a simple English ballad—one of Dibdin's I remember—he created even a greater amount of enthusiasm, and when he bent down to thank me for my assistance, I felt that a new era in my life had begun.

"How absurd it must seem to you to hear me, an old woman, talking in this strain! I myself see the absurdity of it, and yet I can perfectly recollect the glamour which possessed me, the beatific state in which I lived when in that man's company! You must try and picture me to yourself as I was, not as I am, if you would realise all I have to say. He seemed pleased with me, and sat by me for some time. When we left the piano, he inquired who 'the pretty fair girl was,' at the same time indicating my sister, and I introduced him to her, and they chatted; she being sufficiently roused by him to put some animation into her countenance during their conversation. Meanwhile, I sat by, fascinated, enraptured, drinking in every word that he said. He asked permission to call, and came the next day; and when he took his leave, my aunt, who usually had a holy horror of strangers, declared him to be the most delightful man she had ever seen. He came again and again, practised music with us, gave us drawing lessons, showed us sketches of his own, and seemed never so happy, never so much at his ease, as when with us. I say with 'us' advisedly, for he scarcely spoke more to one than to the other, though I saw, or fancied I saw, that if he had a preference, it was for my sister.

"The mere notion of that made me mad, for I loved him already; and she had not heart enough, or energy enough, to love anything but her fine clothes and her bed. She seemed surprised when I asked her if she had no special liking for him, and answered 'No' with exemplary frankness.

"After a fortnight of this kind of life, Mr. Yeldham went away, to stay with some friends to whom he had promised himself, before coming to Stonechester. He said 'Good-bye' to us, and declared that he would soon return; but the pleasure which I felt at this intimation was checked by observing the deep earnest glance with which he regarded my sister as he spoke; depth and earnestness to which she certainly did not respond, even if, as I very much doubt, she perceived them.

"Edward Yeldham went, and took my heart away with him. Two well-known dashing regiments had come into barracks at Chatham, and that was the liveliest winter that Stonechester had known for years; but I seemed to have lost all my old zest for flirtation, and was actually pining after a man who had never spoken words of more than ordinary friendship to me! I sat out dances, and gave idiotic answers when addressed, and was so dull and distraite that people began to say that Emma and Florence Hastings had changed characters. There was some truth in this, for my sister, who had listened unmoved to the dulcet tones of Edward Yeldham, and been not merely untouched by them, but unconscious of the fervent looks of admiration in his great dreamy eyes, was in love at last! In love with a thin little man, with the figure of a ramrod, and the voice of a drill-sergeant!

"This was Major Heriot, who came over to one of our county balls from Brompton barracks, where he was staying with some Indian military friends, and who, in his dry, bamboo kind of manner, seemed taken with Emma. 'He was a mighty warrior,' they told her, and had killed many black men; and on the strength of this, she fell down and worshipped him at once. He had money, which made the courtship very smooth; he was not a man to do anything hurriedly, but in due course of time he proposed, and was accepted. Between his proposal and their marriage, Mr. Yeldham came back to Stonechester. He came to Stonechester, and to our house, at a time when I was the only one at home. I saw him: had I had any doubt of his love for Emma—and I had none—I should have known it by the expression of his face, by the tone of his voice, when he asked me if the news he had heard was true, and if he had to congratulate me upon my sister's engagement. When I told him 'Yes,' he muttered some vague politeness, and speedily changed the subject. 'He had only looked in at Stonechester,' he said, 'on his way to Dover; he was going abroad again for some little time. He should not be back until long after my sister's marriage. Would I remember him very kindly to her,' and—he was gone.

"With such proofs of Mr. Yeldham's love for my sister, my pride should, of course, have taught me to give up the worship with which I had regarded him, and to cast out his image from the place which it occupied in my thoughts. Did

I do this? Not the least in the world. I had seen him. I had listened to him once again, and I was more madly in love with him than ever; besides, I had little fear of rivalry. I was innocent in those days, and I thought that by my sister's marriage, she, my only obstacle, would be removed from my path, and that Edward Yeldham, with his eyes open to my devotion to him, would ask me to become his wife.

"Emma was married. On her wedding-day came, as a present, a set of handsome coral ornaments, with Mr. Yeldham's card, bearing some address in Palermo pencilled on it, inside the case. That was all that was heard of him until some three months after, when, one spring afternoon, he called at the house which the Heriots were then occupying in London. I was staying with them at the time, and carefully marked his manner; I had opportunities of doing so, for he was asked to dinner, and became a frequent visitor at the house. On a subsequent occasion of his being in Mrs. Heriot's company, I saw the fatal mistake which I had made in imagining that her marriage would cure him of his infatuation. Nothing could be more respectful than his manner to her. I firmly believe from the hour of his first introduction to her at the Deanery, to the day of his death, he never addressed to her one word of what the world calls gallantry; but neither his eyes nor the tones of his voice were under his control, and I knew that his worship of Emma was as devoted as ever.

"Major Heriot saw it also; he chafed under this man's constant presence and evident admiration of Mrs. Heriot. He spoke to Emma about it, and she, who thought that the sun shone out of her husband's small grey eyes (you have better eyes than your father, Gerald), came to me full of incredulous laughter, declaring that the whole thing was a mistake, and that Mr. Yeldham's visits were entirely on my account, as she had told the major! I did not contradict her; all I cared for was to see him, to be thrown into his society, to soothe myself in the light of his eyes and with the music of his voice. After all, I was in one sense safe from my rival now. I knew Edward Yeldham's sense of honour, knew that whatever he might feel, the fact of her marriage was sufficient to prevent him ever making love to her, and felt sure that I should one day gain him for myself.

"Very shortly after that affair came a

crisis, unexpected, and far different from anything I had believed or hoped. One evening after a small dinner-party at my sister's, Mr. Yeldham and I were seated in the conservatory; he was talking hypothetically and of a third person, as it afterwards transpired, in a way which led me, maddened as I was by my love for him, to believe that he was pleading his own cause; and on his pausing for a moment, I said something equivalent to an acceptance of his suit. That was the most painful moment of my life, but it was more painful almost for him than for me. I shall never forget how gently and yet how completely he showed me my error, leaving me no straw of hope to cling to. 'I was young,' he said, 'and had my life before me; he was doomed to celibacy and solitude, but while there could never be anything between us stronger than friendship, there was no reason why that friendship should not be most deep and most lasting!' I agreed to this. I gave him my hand upon the bargain, and, as I gave it him, I wished that it had been dagger-armed that I might have slain him where I stood, for I hated him from the bottom of my heart!

"I avoided Mr. Yeldham when he called at the house after that episode, and I suppose four or five months elapsed before I saw him again. He reappeared in September at Baden, where I was staying with the Heriots, and my quick eyes soon showed me that his devotion to Emma had undergone no change. To me his manner was more attentive, more cordial, than it had ever been before. He seemed to feel that we understood each other, and that no misconstruction could be placed upon our relations. My cordiality was seemingly as great as his, but in my heart I hated him, and my one longing was for revenge upon him. This revenge I soon found means to gratify!

"Two days after Mr. Yeldham's appearance, Emma told me that Major Heriot's jealousy was again aroused, and I took care that it should have enough to feed on— Shall I go on? You loved your mother, Gerald, and you will hate me when you hear the rest."

"Go on if you please; it is for my mother's sake that I ask you to proceed."

"As you will," said Mrs. Entwistle, with a slight shrug of her shoulders. "As I said before, I have no feeling of repentance for my actions then. Major Heriot was jealous, and I fed the flame of his jealousy by anonymous letters, and by every possible device which I could carry

out unsuspected. My sister would suffer, it is true, but I had little sisterly feeling for her. I do not think I ever thought of her in the matter; all I thought of was revenge upon the man who had slighted me in my love. Mixed up with this was a feeling that if I could make myself useful to him, make him thoroughly depend on me, I might win him again! You cannot understand the coexistence of two such feelings, but you are not a woman!"

"At last I thought I saw my way to carrying out this idea. A grand ball was to be given at a French banker's, to which no one was to be admitted except in mask and domino, the supper hour being named for the period of identification, when disguise was to be laid aside. Invitations were sent to the Heriots and myself, and accepted by all; but, acting on the advice of an anonymous letter, written by me in the same hand and style as those previously sent to him, Major Heriot pleaded illness just before the time of starting, and begged us to go alone. The anonymous letter told him that he would that night have an opportunity of observing Mr. Yeldham's conduct towards his wife. Mr. Yeldham's dress he knew, as he had had a hand in its selection; Mrs. Heriot and Miss Hastings would be dressed in similar dominoes, black with rose edgings. And as the ladies were exactly alike in height and figure, he must, if he would keep an eye of observation on his wife, be careful to remember the sole distinguishing mark; which was, that she would wear a small lavender coloured bow sewn on the hood of her domino, whereas her sister's would be perfectly plain.

"When the carriage, containing only my sister and myself, drove up to the door of the hotel where the ball was given, she alighted first; and as she was getting out, I securely pinned to the hood of my own domino the lavender bow which I had provided for the purpose. We were both masked, as was every one else, but we were soon joined by Mr. Yeldham, whose dress we recognised at once, and by other friends. I managed to draw Mr. Yeldham apart from the others, and quickly perceived that our movements were watched by a small active figure in a black domino. I danced two consecutive dances with my companion, and afterwards, under the pretext of suffering from heat, asked him to take me into the conservatory, where we seated ourselves in position where our every movement could be seen by the frequent loungers in the passage at the end, whither, however, the sound of our voices could not reach. No

sooner were we seated, than I marked the slight figure in the black domino intently regarding us. I talked with great animation, though, purposely, in a low tone, and seemed to inspire my companion. I reminded him of some story of private theatricals, with which he had amused me when in London, and asked him to repeat it. He acted the scene which he described, and in so doing, he took my hand and bent over me as though addressing me in the most fervent manner. At that moment, with one upward glance, I saw the man in the domino turn away and disappear; then I knew that my revenge on the man that had slighted me was about to be accomplished."

"Good God!" cried Gerald, "I see it all now!"

"Stay and hear me out. I was about to meet some friends in Switzerland, and had arranged to start at a very early hour that morning. On our arrival at home, Mrs. Heriot was surprised to find that her husband had just gone out. He did not return until he had shot Edward Yeldham, in the full belief that he was Mrs. Heriot's lover."

"But could not my mother prove—"

"What? and to whom could she appeal? To me, you will say, to prove that I, and not she, was the person addressed in the conservatory? I was far away by that time, and the letter which she wrote failed to reach me."

"But the domino—Sir Geoffrey—my father—knew that the woman who was in the conservatory wore a lavender bow in her domino hood?"

"That lavender bow was in the hood of Mrs. Heriot's domino when she produced it to convince her husband of his error! I myself pinned it there as she rested on my shoulder on our way back from the ball."

Mrs. Entwistle paused, and looked up at Gerald, expecting an outburst of wrath.

But the tears were in his eyes as he muttered in a broken voice:

"My poor darling! my poor darling! how she must have suffered! Thank God, her innocence can now be proved!"

AN OLD HAMPSHIRE FAMILY.

If their claims of long descent be well founded, the Tichbornes of Tichborne lorded it in Hampshire long before the advent of William the Norman, and were masters of the manor bearing their name when Alfred ruled the land. Trussell says the name is a contraction of De Itchen-

bourne, another writer that it is a corrupt form of Ticeburn. Be this as it may, a Sir Roger de Tichborne built the northern aisle of the village church in the reign of Henry the First. In that of the second king of the name, there lived another Sir Roger, a daring, valiant knight, but an illiberal one withal. When his wife, Mabell, lay upon her death-bed, she was seized with a desire to keep her memory green by bequeathing a dole of bread for yearly distribution to the poor upon the feast of the Annunciation. The master of Tichborne did not care to cross his dying wife, but in the same churlish spirit as actuated Godiva's lord, took all grace from his consent by the condition he imposed. In order to limit his liability, Sir Roger stipulated his lady's bequest should be confined to the annual proceeds of so much of his land as she could travel round unaided, while a certain billet of wood was burning. The infirm dame was carried to a corner of a field and laid upon the ground until the brand was fairly kindled; then she rose and started upon her race against time, crawling at such a pace, and displaying such staying qualities, that her dismayed husband wondered when she would cry, "Hold!—enough!" Stop she did at last, but not before she had won some goodly acres for her death-bed fancy, and performed a feat of pedestrianism so extraordinary, that the scene of it has ever since been known as "The Crawls." This achieved, Lady Mabell was carried back to her chamber, and all the family summoned to hear her last words of prophetic warning. So long as the terms of her hardly-won bequest were strictly carried out would the Tichbornes prosper, but should any of the race attempt to discontinue or divert Lady Mabell's benefaction, his covetousness would entail the extinction of his house; an event to be foreshadowed by a generation of seven sons being succeeded by a generation of seven daughters and no son. So the Lady Day distribution of twenty-six ounce loaves to all comers was founded, and the Tichborne Dole became a Hampshire institution.

County honours were not unknown to the earlier Tichbornes. In three several years in the reign of Edward the Second, Sir John Tichborne served as sheriff of the county of Southampton: besides being a member of parliament, a justice-itinerant, and castellan of the king's castle of Old Sarum. In 1487, the shrievalty was again filled by a John Tichborne. In 1522, Nicholas Tichborne acted as one of the commissioners for collecting the subsidy in aid of

the Duke of Suffolk's army in France, and thirty years afterwards we find a Nicholas Tichborne in the office of sheriff. When England became a Protestant country, the Tichbornes held fast to the old faith, and some of them got into trouble thereby. In 1583, a Mr. Tichborne was subjected to an examination, touching his having departed beyond seas and returned home with certain Popish relics. In 1585, a Nicholas Tichborne, of Hampshire, excused himself for not doing his part in raising light horse for her majesty's service—a penalty attached to nonconformity—on the ground of lack of means, he being a younger brother, and the son of a younger brother, and already in custody for recusancy. The following year saw a member of the old family in custody for a much more grievous offence; nothing less than the conspiring with other "wicked and devilish youths" to murder Elizabeth, bring in foreign invasion, deliver the Queen of Scots, sack the City of London, rob and destroy all the wealthy subjects of the realm, set fire to all the queen's ships, cloy all the great ordnance, to kill the Lord Treasurer, Secretary Walsingham, Sir Ralph Sadler, and Sir Amias Paulet, and to subvert religion and the whole state of government.

Young, handsome, gifted, eager to enjoy life, and rich enough to do so, it was an unlucky hour for Chidiock Tichborne when Jesuit Ballard persuaded his friend Babington to turn conspirator. "Before this thing chanced," said the victim of ill-placed friendship, "we lived together in the most flourishing estate; of whom went report in the Strand, in Fleet-street, and elsewhere about London, but of Babington and Tichborne? No threshold was of force to brave our entry. Thus we lived and wanted nothing we could wish for, and God knows what less in my head than matters of state affairs!" Babington confided his mad plans to Tichborne, and he, while refusing to be a dealer in the affair, kept his friend's counsel, and "so consented." While Babington and his fellows, wise in their own conceit, fancied the crown of England lay at their disposing, wily Walsingham had thrown his net around them, ready to haul them to death when the fitting moment came. Arraigned for high treason, Chidiock Tichborne at first pleaded not guilty, but afterwards admitted his complicity in the plots, and was condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered; a sentence executed in all its horrid details in Lincoln's-inn-fields. Before paying the penalty of his

crime, the unhappy conspirator addressed his "dear countrymen," warning them not to be led away by a too generous friendship as he had been, and asking their pity. "My sorrows may be your joy, yet mix your smiles with tears, and pity my case. I am descended from a house from two hundred years before the Conquest, never stained till this my misfortune. I have a wife, and one child—my wife, Agnes, my dear wife, and there's my grief; and my sisters left in my hand; my poor servants, their master being taken, are dispersed, for all which I do most heartily grieve!" In his Curiosities of Literature, D'Israeli quotes a pathetic letter of leave-taking written by Tichborne to his young wife, and some verses composed by him in the Tower the night before he "perished with all the blossoms of life and genius about him, in the May-time of his existence." What this prison poem was like may be seen from the following stanzas:

My prime of youth is but a frost of cares,
My feast of joy is but a dish of pain,
My crop of corn is but a field of tares,
And all my goods is but vain hope of gain.
The day is fled, and yet I saw no sun,
And now I live, and now my life is done!

My spring is past, and yet it hath not sprung,
The fruit is dead, and yet the leaves are green,
My youth is past, and yet I am but young,
I saw the world, and yet I was not seen.
My thread is cut, and yet it is not spun,
And now I live, and now my life is done!

Among the prisoners in the Fleet in 1594 was one Benjamin Beard, who sought to ingratiate himself with the powers that were by betraying his co-religionists. Writing to Morgan Jones, of Gray's Inn, this precious rascal tells him that Jerome Heath, of Winchester, himself neither a recusant nor suspected for religion, was wont, in times of disturbance, to harbour such persons, and when the writer's grandmother, Mrs. Tichborne, lived, two priests, who were continually in her house, used, upon search being made, to hide at Heath's three or four days together. Beard offered to go to Winchester Castle, where his uncle, Gilbert Tichborne, and other friends remained for their convenience, and deliver them into the hands of the Lord Keeper, providing his lordship would so manage his release that his traitorous doings should not be suspected; but the shameful offer does not seem to have been accepted. In 1597, a Nicholas Tichborne was examined before Attorney-General Coke and Solicitor-General Fleming, and denied that Roger Tichborne, who kept him, ever heard any sermon in his own or

his mother's house, but he confessed his brother Thomas, a seminary priest, had said mass twice in one day in Roger's absence, for the pleasure of Mrs. Tichborne.

Although the Tichbornes, like other Catholic gentry, suffered in purse and person for their attachment to their religion, Camden goes too far in asserting that the family languished in obscurity in consequence of their Catholicism. Recusant as he was, Benjamin Tichborne, Esquire, was one of the batch of ten knights dubbed by Elizabeth at Basing in 1601. Sixteen hundred and three saw him sheriff of the county, very happily for his interests, since it afforded that opportunity which, duly seized, leads on to fortune. This opportunity was the death of the great queen. As soon as the news reached the Hampshire knight's ears, he stayed not for orders from London, but, hurrying to Winchester, at once proclaimed the accession of James the First. His ready zeal was not thrown away upon the new monarch. James gave Sir Benjamin the keepership of Winchester Castle, a post he coveted, in fee farm, with a pension of a hundred a year, for the lives of himself and his eldest son. The latter was shortly afterwards knighted at the Charterhouse, figuring among the guests at a grand entertainment given to the king there. The following year the plague drove the king from London, and he held his court of justice at Winchester, to which city officials, lawyers, peers, and courtiers soon flocked; for upon the 12th of November fifty of the county light horse, under Sir Richard Tichborne's command, rode over to Bagshot, and brought thence Sir Walter Raleigh and other gentlemen concerned in "Raleigh's Plot," who were handed over to the custody of Sir Benjamin Tichborne. The sheriff, of course, officiated at the ensuing trial, and played his part in the farce of the execution, when Cobham, Grey, and Markham were made to taste the bitterness of death before being respited. James was a frequent visitor at Tichborne. Laud records that upon the 29th of August, 1611, the king himself sat at Tichborne to hear his cause respecting the presidency of St. John's, and that day was a favourite one with James for honouring Sir Benjamin with his company; he was at Tichborne on that date in 1615, 1618, and 1623. Upon the last occasion he knighted the host's fourth son, Henry, having previously done the same office for his two other sons —the second, Walter, having been knighted

at Whitehall in 1604, and the third, Benjamin, at Tichborne, 1618, while in 1620 the head of the family had been elevated to the hundred and forty-eighth English baronetcy. Sir Benjamin enjoyed his new title nine years, dying in 1629. In the old church at Tichborne may still be seen the monument raised to his memory and to that of his wife, Amphillis, with whom he lived in inviolate affection for forty years.

Sir Benjamin's sons contrived to retain the royal favour their sire had won for the Tichbornes. His successor, Sir Richard, was sent by Charles the First on an embassy to the Queen of Bohemia, and appointed ranger of the forest of West Beare. Sir Walter married an heiress, but nevertheless was not able to keep out of monetary difficulties. In conjunction with the baronet he did a deal of business in the way of borrowing, but when the time came for paying, the brothers laughed at their creditors, being protected against all legal processes as sworn servants of the crown. In 1626, Mary Pulteney petitioned against the renewal of this protection, complaining that the Tichbornes would neither pay her nine-hundred pounds they owed her, nor give reasonable security for an extension of time. They were ordered to satisfy the lady upon pain of losing their privileges, and apparently obeyed orders, for in 1637 a host of creditors prayed the king's council to stay protection until their long-standing claims were settled. One of them, John Button, sheriff of Hants, setting forth how "out of his affection for Sir Richard and Sir Walter Tichborne, he not only furnished their occasions with ready money, but stood engaged for them for other moneys amounting to five hundred pounds," which had been due five years, but they stood upon their protection, notwithstanding they had sufficient to make good their debts, and yet live like themselves. Hard pressed upon all sides, the Tichbornes became petitioners in turn; assuring the king that in the space of two years they had paid or secured thirteen thousand pounds' worth of their own and other men's debts, but in the face of the clamours of so many importunate creditors, they would not ask for a renewal of their protection, but besought his majesty to summon their creditors before the council, that a reasonable composition might be agreed upon. This was done, but we can find no record of the result.

Impecuniosity was the badge of the Tichbornes at this time. Sir William Calley, writing to Richard Harvey, says: "The

sheriff of Hants has laid a kind of extent on the Tichborne's lands, which is likely to be worth nothing, and so I am in good possibility of being cheated out of my five pounds. Being John Tichborne is the king's servant, advise me how I might obtain leave to arrest him." This Tichborne tried to get a lease from the crown of all the quarries and mines "of chalk, limestone, and sand" about Milford Haven, but was baulked by the officials, to whom the matter was referred, reporting that the people there depended upon those things for their means of tillage, and that it was not fitting they should be forced to obtain licenses from any private person. Probably this was John Tichborne, D.D., whose wife, Priscilla, besought Laud's help, complaining that when she married the doctor, he promised not to meddle with the property left her by her first husband, but as soon as the knot was tied, in defiance of his promise, he mortgaged a house of hers for the benefit of one of his sons, and afterwards made a deed of gift of the whole of her estate to his other son, who, in virtue thereof, had seized upon everything, even to her wearing apparel. While the D.D. was robbing his wife and dreaming of enriching himself at the expense of the folks of Milford Haven, Sir Richard Tichborne hit upon a scheme to put money in his purse. He discovered that, by a law passed in Elizabeth's reign, it was enacted that no servant should leave his service without a testimonial that he was free to do so. No officer having been appointed to issue such documents, the act had never been put in force. Sir Richard asked for the appointment, with liberty to charge twopence for every testimonial he issued. King Charles, anxious to confer a mark of favour upon the baronet, commanded certain officials to see to the affair, and settle what rent Sir Richard should pay to the crown for such privilege. We fancy Sir Richard was disappointed of his twopence, matters of greater moment soon occupying the minds of the king and his advisers, for the great conflict was at hand. When it came, of the four brothers, Walter was dead and Henry busy in Ireland; Benjamin, disgusted with the idea of civil war, retired to the Continent; and Sir Richard cast in his fortunes with those of his patron, contented to hold a subordinate command under his brother-in-law, Lord Ogle, whose troops he admitted to garrison Winchester Castle for the king.

Sir Richard Tichborne died soon after the commencement of the war, and was

succeeded by his third son, Henry, who, like him, did duty under Ogle, fighting at the battle of Cheridown, and holding the castle obstinately against the attacks of the parliamentarians, under his own brother-in-law, Sir William Waller, until nothing was left to fight for, his loyalty being punished by the sequestration of his estates, until the whirligig of time brought its revenges. In 1666, we find Sir Henry Tichborne obtaining a passport to visit Flanders and the Spa waters for his health's sake. Returning to England in 1668, he was, much to his astonishment, arrested and committed to Winchester, shortly afterwards being transferred to the Tower, to remain a close prisoner there for a year and a half, without having the slightest notion of what he was accused. All he knew was that his house at Tichborne had been ransacked from top to bottom, and the wainscotings and ceilings pulled down, to find some evidence against him. He was one of Bedloe's victims, and was released, untried, at the end of three years. The only compensation Sir Henry received for his ill-deserved imprisonment was the lieutenancy of the New Forest, and the promise of being paid for certain land appropriated by the king for his new palace at Winchester; but neither he nor any of his kin ever touched the money.

While the Tichbornes were thus under a cloud at home, one of the race was skilfully and gallantly carving his own fortune in Ireland. This was Sir Henry, the youngest son of Sir Benjamin, who, after an apprenticeship to the art of war in the Low Countries, received from James the First the command of a regiment, and the governorship of Lifford Castle. When the rebellion broke out in Ireland in 1641, Sir Henry Tichborne was appointed governor of Drogheda, and with his own thousand men and Sir Thomas Lucas's horse set out for his post. Catholic as he was, the new governor waited two hours in the streets of Drogheda before he could obtain a lodging, and then had to take forcible possession. The only defences the town could boast were an old wall and an ordinary ditch, and in three weeks' time the place was invested by a rebel army fourteen thousand strong. For three months the siege went on, until the garrison was reduced to feed upon horses, dogs, and cats; but the governor never thought of giving in, and so galled the besiegers by vigorous sallies that they were glad to decamp before the Duke of Ormond's army

of relief appeared on the scene. When he received reinforcements, Sir Henry followed his foes up until he had driven them into Ulster. For this he was made privy councillor, and in 1642 one of the two lords justices of Ireland, in the place of Sir W. Parsons, "being a man of so excellent a fame," writes Clarendon, "that though the parliament was heartily angry at the removal of the other, and knew this would never be brought to serve their turn, yet they had nothing to object against him." While holding this office, Tichborne helped the distressed Protestants so heartily, that when parliament became supreme, it kept his regiment in the service, and retained Sir Henry in his Drogheda governorship. The execution of the king, however, was too much for the brave veteran; he threw up his appointment and retired into private life, "till such times as the confusions among those who had usurped the government had given opportunity to the well-wishers of the royal family to show themselves," and when that time came the old captain had a chief hand in forwarding the cause in Ireland. Charles the Second made him field-marshal of the forces in that country, an appointment he held until his death in 1667, at the age of eighty-six. His eldest son had died before him in battle; his second son was knighted by Charles the Second; this Sir William Tichborne lost two sons on the battle-field and one at sea; his successor was knighted by William the Third, created baronet in 1697, and upon the accession of George the First elevated to the peerage; but the heir to the family honours being cast away in the bay of Liverpool, the Irish barony of Ferrand became extinct upon the death of the first baron.

Tired of court and camp the Tichbornes henceforward remained satisfied with maintaining their position among the squirearchy of Hampshire. In 1786, the old house was represented by Sir Henry Tichborne, who, in consequence of the complaints of the magistracy of the rioting attending the gathering together of rogues and vagabonds from all quarters upon the coming round of Lady Day, resolved to dare the ancient prophecy and abolish the Tichborne Dole. Singularly enough, he was blessed with a family of seven sons and one daughter; more singular still, his successor had seven daughters and never a son, and at his death the property passed to his brother Edward, who had changed his name to that of Doughty, and was known as Sir Edward Tichborne-Doughty, so that Lady Mabell's

prediction was, after a fashion, fulfilled; but in 1853 the two names changed places by royal license, and the Tichbornes were Tichbornes once again. The doom threatened seven centuries ago seemed near a more precise fulfilment when the once prolific family was represented in the Baronetage by a posthumous infant and his uncle, "Roger Charles, supposed to have been lost at sea in 1854."

SQUARE AT LAST.

THE Englishman at large is nothing if not a sportsman, and the New World affords him singular advantages for the indulgence of his pet proclivities. He who in the lightness of his heart says to himself, "Let me get up and kill something," is in America seldom at a loss for something to kill, and can please himself as to the size of his game, from the dainty quail to tough old Ebenezer, the renowned "grizzly" himself.

A few years ago I was much embarrassed by the difficulty of choice. Florida held out many attractions, but, on the other hand, I was strongly tempted to try the hunting-grounds about two hundred miles west of Omaha, where, an energetic Western friend wrote me, all kinds of game were to be had in plenty, especially, he informed me, in a fine burst of enthusiasm, "big game," deer, buffaloes, bears, and—and—Indians. With many a sigh I turned from this alluring prospect, as involving the sacrifice of too much time, and betook myself to the St. John river, Florida, and, engaging the services of one Lafayette K. Wallop, better known in that part of the country as Chunky Lafe, in allusion to his thick-set muscular conformation, as huntsman, boatman, and general factotum, I set out in his canoe, in quest of deer, Lafe paddling away at a great pace. Chunky Lafe was a silent man, sparing in his speech, but prodigal of his thews and sinews. His powerful strokes sent the light craft flying rapidly past the marshy banks, wooded to the water's edge, till, just as I was beginning to enjoy the enforced repose of the passive tenant of a canoe, a sudden shout from the hunter startled me out of my semi-somnolent condition.

"Say, boss," said the Chunky one, "guess you'd best lay down in the canoe."

"Why on earth should I lie down? I do not see any reason for hiding."

"Wal, fact is Hefty Bill Slocum is coming up stream."

"And what have I to do with Mr. Slocum?" I snapped out rather impatiently.

"Wal yer see, Bill and me is on shootin' terms, and every time we meet we air kinder bound to have a crack at each other; so as I guess you, c'yurnel, ain't in this deal, you ought not to put up any stakes; this here muss ain't none of your funeral, but it might soon be if you kep' settin' up thar."

Here was a delightful situation! Two Southern desperados burning to engage in an aquatic duel, all remonstrance or interference absolutely useless, and worse than useless; the agreeable prospect of the canoe being upset in a broad rapid river thickly tenanted by alligators being coupled with the probability of being accidentally picked off by the rifle of Mr. Slocum.

However, as the exposure of my upper works to Hefty Bill's fire could serve no useful purpose, I followed the advice of Lafe and lay down tolerably well under cover, breathing many a prayer for the success of our side. Peering over the edge I saw that our opponent was waiting, rifle in hand, for us to come within range, a feat we were accomplishing with detestable rapidity, while my gondolier's rifle was at hand ready cocked, so that he could drop the paddle and seize his weapon at the slightest movement of his adversary. Nearer and nearer we came, not a sound breaking the deathlike silence but the lightplash of the paddle, as Lafe, by a few last vigorous strokes, shot within range of the enemy. Dropping his paddle with lightning speed the hunter seized his rifle. The report of the two weapons rang out together as accurately as if the combatants had fired by signal. The splash and ricochet of Slocum's bullet told me my man was unhurt, when Chunky Lafe, lifting his fox-skin cap, said slowly and solemnly:

"Square at last, Bill Slocum! Poor Sal!"

A canoe floating lazily down the river was all that remained to tell that Hefty Bill Slocum had ever existed.

The mention of a woman's name by my usually taciturn guide naturally awakened my curiosity, but the moment did not seem favourable for investigating the mystery, so I discreetly held my tongue, but I suppose looked inquiringly enough, as, after paddling swiftly and silently for nearly an hour, Lafe deigned to open his lips.

"Beg pardon, c'yurnel, for bustin' up your day's sport with my private biz', but guess you'll excuse me when I tell you the

story. Thar's a good friend of mine lives around the creek here, and if you don't mind we'll lay over at his shanty, and after supper I'll tell you the rights of the muss 'twixt me and Bill."

I consented gladly enough, feeling that after the scene just enacted all hunting would be utterly tame and spiritless. Paddling a short distance up a narrow tributary stream (always called a creek in these countries) we came upon a large and cheerful-looking homestead. Lafe's friend received us with true American hospitality; his house, his meat, his drink, his horses, and his dogs were all at our service in a moment. After a stiff horn of Monongahela to whet (very unnecessarily) our appetites, we fell pell-mell on a savoury meal of oysters, fish, and bear-meat, not forgetting hog and hominy. At the conclusion of a repast worthy of full-grown boa-constrictors, our host produced a demi-john of old Santa Cruz, and pipes being lighted Chunky Lafe pulled himself together, and expectorating freely, began.

"Yer see, c'yurnel and friend Wash" (Lafe's friend rejoiced in the name of Washington K. Pegrim), "this was a kinder old score as I rubbed off to-day. In the good old times afore the war, Bill Slocum and me was fast friends, like brothers I was agoin' to say, but I've ginerally found brothers love each other in a slack-baked sorter way; anyhow me and Bill was allus around together, and barrin' a kinder likin' for huntin', fishin', playin' poker, drinkin', and fightin', was two as likely young boys as any in Augustine. I can't say as we was particklerly heavy on work—no Southern gentleman was in them days—but with a bit of land for cotton, a tidy corn-patch, a drove of hogs, and a few niggers, we managed to scratch along pretty well. All my relations had passed in their checks long ago, except sister Sal, and I guess a prettier, smarter, and more stylish gal wasn't to be found in the State of Floridy."

Here Lafe seemed to suffer from a slight huskiness, but imbibing a huge draught of Santa Cruz, went on, visibly refreshed:

"Wal, poor Sal was run after pretty much by the boys, but I kept a sharp eye on 'em, I did, for though not very rich, we was high-toned, no high-toneder family lived in them parts, and my sister was all in all to me, more nor anybody will ever be agin. Then come the war, and you gentlemen know what that misunderstandin' brought about. We Southerners rose like one man, and me and Bill weren't behind-

hand, you bet. Many a hard day's march and hard day's fightin' we had together, with nary shoe to our feet, and nothin' but a pocketful of parched corn to live on for days and days together. At last came the bad day of Gettysburg, and me and Bill was in the thick of it. Four times we charged up to the muzzles of their everlastin' guns, and four times we got driv back. Yer see we had to cross a kinder open space right under their fire, and were so eternally whipped before we reached the tarnation skunks, that our regiments shrievled up to mere skeletons afore we got within arm's length. Wal, we come on agin and agin yellin' like devils, but it warn't no good; they driv us back, and at last I missed Bill.

"Wal, I ain't the man to brag o' that, but I went out into the hottest fire I ever seen, and brought in Bill hit pretty hard. We had a bad time that day, but I brought off Bill, and somehow he pulled through, and was sent home down South to recuperate. To make a long story short, I went through the whole war, and when our side bust up, went down home with a sore heart, a ragged suit, and a derned empty pocket.

"Through all the cussed affair I had looked forward to seein' sister Sal and Hefty Bill, with the kinder feelin' I dessay you can understand, but when I got one evening to Augustine, I found the old shanty shet up, and wonderin' what was the matter, made tracks for the corner grocery. There I found the folks glad enough to see me, but seemin' to look queer, and act silent and dummy, as if they was to a funeral. So I says right out, 'What in thunder's the matter with you all, and what's come o' Sal?' Wal, yer see, the whole thing come out at last. Bill Slocum had come home invalided and dead broke, and Sal, of course, took him in, and nussed him as if he'd been her brother, and, after the manner of wimmen folks, fell in love with her patient. Sal, I guess, warn't the first fool of her sex, and won't be the last by a long shot.

"Now comes the worst part of the story. One mornin' they was both missed, and there was no doubt that that scoundrel Bill had run off with her to one of the cities North, without leaving letter or line to track 'em by. My mind was soon made up. I sold the old place and what little stuff was in it for what I could get, and made tracks for the North to find Sal, and mayhap get square with Bill.

"I went through the North, city by city,

in my weary search, and at last found my poor little sister, but, gentlemen, I would rather have found her headstone in the cemetery than have found her as I found her. I took good care of the poor girl, but it was no use; she pined away, and I buried her in Chicago, and then looked around for the trail of Hefty Bill.

"Nary soul could tell a word about him, and poor Sal, God bless her, never would. She was true to him, bad as he had used her. Wal, I could not find Bill anywhere, and as I had to do somethin' to live, came down here huntin' around a little and drinkin' a great deal, when one day, at Tim Mulligan's bar, who should I see but Hefty Bill Slocum himself. Gentlemen, I have been all through a big war, and in many a dashing charge, but I never felt as I did at that moment. My head swam round like a young gal's in her fust waltz, a fog came over my eyes, my hand was on my Derringer when I saw a flash across my eyes, felt a warm splash, heard a shot, and all was dark. They told me afterwards that Bill fired a little too quick for me, and that the shot brought on quite a pretty free fight. There was a roughish lot around Mulligan's, and they weren't the boys to let a muss go past without taking a hand. So Bill scored the first trick in our small game, but I'd got to get square with him, and I tried more nor once, but his everlastin' luck helped him till to-day. But to-day," and here Lafe dropped his head on his chest and stared into the fire, "I guess we've got square at last!"

SUMMER IN FRANCE, 1871.

THE summer has come back again, I feel
The sunshine cover me from brow to feet;
The bee goes searching for his honeyed meal,
The rose is crimson-dyed and smells full sweet.

The lily looks as stately and serene
As in the day ere I began to grieve;
The stream is musical, the forest green;
The faithless nightingales sing loud at eve.
Why now should flow'rets deck the blood-stained
ground?

O blooming rose! O cruel flaunting thing,
That wear'st the colour of my love's death wound!

O birds that know him dead and yet will sing!

The plum is hanging on the southern wall,
It waxeth ripe beneath the sun's warm ray;
Last year we did not wait for it to fall,
But plucked its sweetness as we went our way.

Now let it roll and wither into mould,
Like that dear hand that dropped away from mine;
Since so much life is silenced and grown cold,
'Tis good to rot while star and sunbeam shine.

For o'er our sun there came a cloud of gloom,
When shout of war came blown across the lea;
To thee my love it was the trump of doom:
It was the trump of doom to thee and me.

Now all return that shared our joy before.
Of flower and sunshine, bough and singing bird;
Only thy footstep cometh back no more,
Only thy voice shall not again be heard.

The summer has come back, but not for me.
I do not even know thy place of rest,
Or useless flowers might win some sanctity,
By shedding bloom above so brave a breast.

Somewhere the grass is springing o'er thy head,
And so I'll love the grass and hold it sweet,
And when content at last I too am dead,
I'll have no other covering for my feet.

Upon my heart shall lie no sculptured stone,
No idle wreath above my brow shall twine;
The tender grass shall wave o'er me alone:
Only the breeze shall know thy grave and mine.

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

GREY FRIARS (THE BLUECOAT SCHOOL).

OF the old Friary the cloisters and butt-
ery alone remain. Five priests and four
laymen of the mendicant order of Grey
Minorite Friars came over from Italy, early
in the reign of Henry the Third, and at
first lodged with their religious kinsmen, the
Black Friars, in "Oldborne." John Travers,
a sheriff, then charitably gave them a house
in Cornhill, and after a time John Ewin, a
worthy mereer, let them build their cells on
a void spot of ground near St. Nicholas's
shambles (now Christ's Hospital).

Gifts from the pious and the penitent
were laid upon gifts, till the Friary became
a vast fortress of religion, and wealth slowly
sapped the piety poverty had fostered. But
Henry the Eighth knocked one black No-
vember Monday at the Friary gate, and,
sturdier mendicant than the monks them-
selves, swept all their shining church-plate
into his waggons. The annual valuation
of the Friary was put down at thirty-two
pounds, nineteen shillings, and tenpence.
The church then became a mere profane
warehouse for the spoils harried by our
archers and men-at-arms from Calais and
Boulogne, and these rude spoilers defaced,
as worthy Stow mentions with true anti-
quarian regret, all the splendid emblazoned
monuments of the royal and pious benefac-
tors. Nine railed-in stately tombs of alabas-
ter and marble were split and defaced, and
seven score marble gravestones were sold
for a paltry eighty pounds, by Sir Martin
Bowes, an irreverent and greedy goldsmith,
then alderman of London. It was at this
ruthless and irreligious time that brutal feet
trampled to dust or ruin the monuments of
four queens. First of these was Margaret, the
second wife of Edward the First; secondly,
that "she-wolf of France," Isabella, who
dethroned her weak husband, Edward the

Second, and ended her life miserably in
prison after twenty-eight years of purga-
torial agony; thirdly, Joan of the Tower,
Queen of Scots, the daughter of this wicked
woman; fourthly, Isabel Fitzwarin, Queen
of the little Isle of Man. Where the merry
blue boys now race and scamper also slept
Beatrice, Duchess of Bretagne, a daughter
of Henry the Third, and many brave and
stalwart noblemen, knights, and squires,
whose bones were dust and whose swords
were rust dreary ages ago.

The dissolution of the monasteries sent
thousands of lazy monks abroad to beg and
rob. The herds of peasants who had lived
on monastery doles began to cry aloud for
famine, and the poor grew up without
religion and without education. The want
became a crying one, and one of the few
good acts of Henry the Eighth's reign was
a gift, a fortnight before his miserable
death, of the Grey Friars, St. Bartholomew,
and Bethlehem Hospitals to the City
for charitable uses, together with lands
worth five hundred marks yearly. This
great gift was announced to the citizens
by excellent Bishop Ridley, in a sermon at
St. Paul's Cross. On the accession of the
young king, that "royal imp of grace,"
Bishop Ridley, in a sermon at Westminster,
urged him, before his court, to comfort
and relieve the poor. After the sermon the
king sent for Ridley, and in the great
gallery at Westminster gave him a pri-
vate interview, insisting on the bishop
remaining covered. The royal boy, with
much earnestness, for the appeal had
touched his good heart, requested Ridley to
tell him how he could best perform the duty
inculcated in the sermon. Ridley, surprised
at the immediate springing up of the good
seed, could hardly recover himself suffi-
ciently to urge the king to beg the lord
mayor and aldermen to consult on the sub-
ject. Edward, however, would not let
Ridley leave till the letter was signed and
sealed, and given to the worthy bishop to
deliver to Sir Richard Dobbs, the lord
mayor. The result of this letter was the
founding of Christ's Hospital at the Grey
Friars, for the education of poor and father-
less children, who were "to be trained up
in the knowledge of God, and some virtuous
exercises, to the overthrow of beggary." For
the idle and vicious poor, Bridewell
Palace was turned into a prison, and for the
sick poor the Hospitals of St. Thomas in
Southwark, and St. Bartholomew in West
Smithfield, were charitably founded. When
the charter was drawn up, the wise young

king wrote, with his own hand, in the blank space the scriveners had left for the amount of annual endowment, "four thousand marks by the year," and then said, in the hearing of all the privy council, "Lord, I yield thee most hearty thanks that thou hast given me life thus long to finish this work, to the glory of thy name." Not long after, this boy of infinite promise died. King Edward also left to the four great charities six hundred pounds yearly, from the property of the decayed hospital of the Savoy. The citizens pressed forward the good work, and that same year admitted three hundred and sixty children. On Christmas Day, 1552, when the lord mayor and aldermen rode to St. Paul's in the afternoon, the ruddy children, in livery of russet cotton, stood in line from St. Lawrence-lane, towards St. Paul's; but the next Easter they were clothed in blue, and have ever since affected that goodly colour. The boys' dress is a corruption of the old monastic garb. The loose-skirted dark blue coat is the monk's tunic; the under-coat, or yellow, is the sleeveless underfrock of the friar; the narrow belt is the monkish cord changed to leather; and the neck-bands are the clerical adornments of the Carolan times. The yellow breeches smack of the Georgian epoch, and the little muffin cap, now justly abandoned, is also of great antiquity.

The Hospital school soon found benefactors. Sir William Chester, and John Calthorpe, a rich draper, built the walls adjoining St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and vaulted over the City ditch from Aldersgate to Newgate, which before had been a great source of annoyance and illness to the boys. The playground, still called by Blues the "Ditch," marks the line of the old City moat. Another worthy donor was Richard Castle, an industrious shoemaker, generally known as the "Cock of Westminster," from his untiring hammer calling up all the neighbours, summer and winter, before four o'clock in the morning. His steady thrift won him lands and tenements near the old abbey, of the yearly value of four-and-forty pounds, and, as honest Stow says approvingly, "having no children, with the consent of his wife (who survived him, and was a virtuous good woman), he gave the same lands wholly to Christ's Hospital, to the relief of the innocent and fatherless children."

The Great Fire, raging up eastward from Pudding-lane, did not forget to look in at Christ's Hospital, injuring the south

front, and burning the church in Newgate-street. In 1672, Charles the Second, roused by Sir Robert Clayton, ordered the Exchequer to pay an annuity of three hundred and seventy pounds ten shillings to the Hospital, and also a seven years' donation of one thousand pounds, an old debt due to the Hospital from the crown, and with much difficulty wrung from it. This same worthy Sir Robert Clayton and Sir Patience Ward took good care this gold went to found a mathematical school, where forty of the Bluecoat boys could study navigation, five of them being examined every six months by the Brethren of the Trinity House, and ten of them being yearly sent to sea. The King's Boys, as they are called, though Sir Robert was the real benefactor, used to be presented to the reigning king on New Year's Day, and afterwards on the queen's birthday, but the quaint custom (duly recorded in a large dull picture by Verro in the great hall) was discontinued during the insanity of George the Third. The boys on the king's foundation wear on their left shoulders a badge, with allegorical figures upon it representing arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, to distinguish them from the Twelves, or lower mathematical school, who wear their badges on the right shoulder. The Twos form another class, originated by a bequest of a Mr. Stock, in 1780, who left three thousand pounds to maintain four boys (those bearing the name of Stock preferred), two to be taught navigation, and two to be brought up to trades.

The rebuilding of the south front, in 1675, was attended with interesting circumstances, and proves to us what good, charitable, and wise men some of those old London merchants were. That same worthy Sir Robert Clayton, governor of the Hospital, who extorted the money from Charles the Second, was seized with a severe illness, from which, in spite of many doctors, he recovered. There was faith even in those evil days, and he arose from his sick-bed impressed with the desire to make some acknowledgment to God for his merciful goodness. Consulting his partner, Mr. Morice, and his best friend, Mr. Firmin, he resolved to rebuild the south front of Christ's Hospital, still in ruins from the Great Fire. He kept his name concealed, and spent seven thousand pounds on the good work. When Charles the Second sold himself to France, and, trusting to our enemies, grew more lawless and despotic than ever, he deprived the City of its charter, and removed Sir Robert

from the government of the Hospital. Then it was that Mr. Firmin spoke out, and told the time-serving governors what a benefactor they had displaced. In 1680, Sir John Frederick, another City man, gave five thousand pounds to rebuild the great hall at his sole expense. Three years later the governors founded the juvenile school at Hertford, where forty girls are still taught to knit yellow stockings, and four hundred boys learn to wear them. Generosity is contagious, and the old City merchants had large souls. In 1694, Sir John Moore, whose grave statue still smiles benignantly on generation after generation of yellow stockings, founded the writing school at an expense of five thousand pounds. In 1705, Sir Francis Child, the banker at Temple Bar, and a friend of Pope, rebuilt, at his own expense, the ward over the east cloister, as a worn inscription still testifies; and in 1724, Mr. Travers, another generous benefactor, arose, who gave a nautical turn to the school for ever by leaving money enough to educate forty or fifty sons of naval lieutenants. A century after the writing school a new grammar school was built on the north side of the ditch. An infirmary was erected in 1722, and in 1824 the Duke of York laid the first stone of the new hall, which was designed by Mr. Shaw, the architect of St. Dunstan's, and was opened in 1829. This huge chamber, of rather flimsy Tudor, one hundred and eighty-seven feet long, and eighty-one feet wide, stands on the site of the old City wall, and of the refectory of the Grey Friars. At five tables the Blues, whether Grecians, King's Boys, Twelves, or Twos, dine daily. The dietary of the boys is still somewhat monastic; the breakfast, till 1824, was plain bread and beer, and the dinner three times a week consisted only of milk-porridge, rice-milk, and pea-soup. The old school rhyme, imperishable as the Iliad, runs:

Sunday, all saints;
Monday, all souls;
Tuesday, all trenchers;
Wednesday, all bowls;
Thursday, tough jack;
Friday, no better;
Saturday, pea-soup with bread
and butter.

The boys, like the friars in the old refectory, still eat their meat off wooden trenchers, and ladle their soup with wooden spoons from wooden bowls. The beer is brought up in leather jacks, and retailed in small piggins. Charles Lamb does not speak highly of the food. The small beer was of the smallest, and tasted of its leather re-

ceptacle. The milk-porridge was blue and tasteless, the pea-soup coarse and choking. The mutton was roasted to shreds. The boiled beef was poisoned with marigolds. Worst of all, the nurses used to carry away boldly, for their own table, one of every two joints scrupulously weighed out by the matrons for the boys' dinners. There was a curious custom at Christ's Hospital in Lamb's time never to touch "gags" (the fat of fresh boiled beef), and a Blue would have blushed, as at the exposure of some heinous immorality, to have been detected eating that forbidden portion of his allowance of animal food, the whole of which, while he was in health, was little more than sufficient to allay his hunger. The same, or even greater refinement, was shown in the rejection of certain kinds of sweet cake. What gave rise to these supererogatory penances, these self-denying ordinances? The gag-eater was held as equivalent to a ghoul, loathed, shunned, and insulted. Of a certain juvenile monster of this kind Lamb tells us one of his most charming anecdotes, droll and tender as his own exquisite humour. A gag-eater was observed to carefully gather the fat left on the table, and to secretly stow away the disreputable morsels in the settle at his bedside. A dreadful rumour ran that he secretly devoured them at midnight; but he was watched again and again, and it was not so. At last, on a leave-day, he was marked carrying out of bounds a large blue check handkerchief. That, then, was the accursed thing. It was suggested that he sold it to beggars. Henceforward he moped alone. No one spoke to him. No one played with him. Still he persevered. At last two boys traced him to a large worn-out house inhabited by the very poor, such as then stood in Chancery-lane with open doors and common staircases. The gag-eater stole up four flights of stairs, and the wicket was opened by an old woman meanly clad. Suspicion being now certainty, the spies returned with cruel triumph to tell the steward. He investigated the matter with a kind and patient sagacity, and the result was, that the supposed mendicants turned out to be really the honest parents of the brave gag-eater. "This young stork, at the expense of his good name, had all this while only been feeding the old birds." "The governors on this occasion," says Lamb, "much to their honour, voted a present relief to the family, and presented the boy with a silver medal. The lesson which the steward read upon rash judgment,

on the occasion of publicly delivering the medal, I believe would not be lost upon his auditory. I had left school then, but I well remember the tall shambling youth, with a cast in his eye, not at all calculated to conciliate hostile prejudices. I have since seen him carrying a baker's basket. I think I heard he did not do quite so well by himself as he had done by the old folks."

In Lamb's time the punishments at Christ's Hospital were extremely severe. Absconders wore fetters for the first offence. There were regular dungeons then, and runaways and other offenders for the second time were treated as if in Newgate. The cells were little square bins, where a boy could just lie at his length upon straw and a blanket (mattresses were afterwards substituted), and the peep of light, let in askance from prison-like orifices, was barely enough to read by. Here poor children, just torn from their mothers' apron-strings, were locked in alone all day, only seeing the porter who brought the bread and water, but who was not allowed to speak, or the still less agreeable beadle, who came twice a week to call out the pale and scared culprit for his periodical chastisement. At night the poor little wretch was left alone to his terror. One or two instances of lunacy or attempted suicide at length convinced the governors of the impolicy of this part of the sentence, and the midnight torture was dispensed with. This fancy of dungeons for children sprang from Howard's brain, "for which," says Lamb, "(saving the reverence due to holy Paul), methinks I could willingly spit upon his statue." For the third offence the incorrigible offender was exposed in a sort of san-benito, like a lamplighter's cap and jacket. In the hall, in the presence of all his comrades, he received his final punishment. The beadle, in complete uniform, was the executioner. The steward was also present, and two governors attended to see that no stripes fell short. If the beadle turned pale, a glass of brandy was administered to him. The scourging was after the old Roman fashion, long and stately. The lictors accompanied the criminal quite round the hall. The boys were generally too faint to note much, but report went that the victim's naked back grew slashed and livid. The disgraced boy was then handed over in his san-benito to his angry friends, or, if an orphan and friendless, to his parish officer, who always

waited for such criminals at the hall-gate, to cuff him clear out of Eden. These punishments, monastic in their severity and ruthless in their execution, were evidently founded on the tradition of the school being a charity. When it ceased to be so, such punishments became a mere disgraceful anomaly.

But let us get back into the sunshine, the true atmosphere of happy boyhood. Those were merry days with the Blues when, on long summer afternoons, they would sally out to the New River, and, in the fields near Newington, "wanton like young dace," or troutlets in the pool, living for hours in the water, never caring for dressing when they had once stripped. Then there were the ever-repeated visits to the lions in the Tower, where, known to every warder, the Blues, by ancient privilege and courtesy immemorial, had a prescriptive right to admission—not to mention the favourite games of leap-frog and bait the bear, in which the school excelled. There were, too, the solemn, old-fashioned processions through the City at Easter, with the lord mayor's pleasant largess of buns, wine, and sixpence, "with the festive questions and civic pleasantries of the dispensing aldermen, which were more to us than all the rest of the banquet." Nor does the delightful chronicler forget the stately suppings in public, "when the well-lighted hall, and the confluence of well-dressed company who came to see us, made the whole look more like a concert or assembly than a scene of a plain bread-and-butter collation." Then there was the grave annual Latin oration upon Saint Matthew's Day (now altered), when the senior Grecian, in quaint Erasmian dress, perched on a table, dilates to mayor and aldermen, who wisely pretend to understand the ancient language spoken in the fine fluent continental manner, the praises of those patriarch Blues: the learned Camden and pious Stillingfleet, or oftener Joshua Barnes, the editor of Euripides in Queen Anne's time, and perennial Markland, a later and equally eminent Greek critic. The hymns and anthems and the well-toned organ fitly heralded the festive joys of Christmas, "when," as Lamb says, "the richest of us would club our stock to have a gaudy day, sitting round the fire, replenished with logs, and the penniless and he that could contribute nothing partook in all the mirth, and in some of the substantialities, of the feasting." Nor does the immortaliser of the fine old school

forget the nightly Advent carols sung at ten P.M., and for which Lamb, when he was sent to bed at seven, used to lie awake to hear the fresh young voices of the Grecians and monitors, till he felt transported to the fields of Bethlehem, and the song sung by angels' voices to the shepherds.

But again to tune our harps, as the bigger wiggled poets say, to graver strains. The school in the old times was, like the discipline, Spartan enough. The King's Boys, roughly nurtured by William Wales, a stern, north country sailor, who had sailed with Captain Cook, grew up hardy, brutal, graceless, often wicked, and were the ceaseless terror of the younger boys, who ran shuddering from the cloisters whenever the cry was raised, "The first order is coming." These janizaries of the school were the athletes of the Hospital; they never moved out of the way for any one, and many a Cheapside apprentice and greasy butcher-boy of Newgate Market felt the impetus of their fists, and had ocular demonstration of their stubborn valour. The system of fagging, in its very worst form, prevailed, or rather raged, in Christ's Hospital at the end of the last century. The young brutes, as Lamb justly calls them, used to wake the last eleven lads in the dormitory in the coldest winter nights (time after time), to thrash them with leather thongs because there had been talking heard after they were gone to bed. The same tyranny drove the younger lads away from the fires in snow time, and, under the heaviest penalties, forbade them to drink water during the summer nights. One monitor (afterwards naturally enough seen on the hulks) actually branded, with a red-hot iron, a small boy who had offended him, and nearly starved forty minor lads by exacting from them, daily, half their bread to pamper a young ass, whom, with the connivance of his flame, the nurse's daughter, he had contrived to smuggle in and stable on the leads of the ward.

Of course Christ's Hospital had ghosts. How could an old friary, where wicked Queen Isabella, the tormentor of her husband, lay, be without them? Yet were they of a lowly kind. In one of the cloisters was a hollow in a stone, which used in Leigh Hunt's time to be attributed by some to the angry stamping of the ghost of a beadle's wife. There was also a traditional horror in the school of a mysterious being only seen at night, and called the "Fazzer." Like the African Mumbo Jumbo, the fazzer was

perfectly known to be only one of the big boys disguised, yet an epidemical fear invested him with somewhat of a supernatural character. The fazzer's amiable habit was to pull small boys out of bed, or to fuzz (pull) their hair in a goblin way. The fazzer always disguised his face, and sometimes appeared in his white shirt, dumb and motionless, in the moonlight. "One time," says Leigh Hunt, in his agreeable way, "I saw this phenomenon under circumstances more than usually unearthly. It was a fine moonlight night. I was then in a ward the casement of which looked on the churchyard. My bed was under the second window from the east, not far from the statue of Edward the Sixth. Happening to wake in the middle of the night, and cast up my eyes, I saw on a bedstead near me, and in one of the casements, a figure in its shirt, which I took for the fazzer. The room was silent, the figure motionless. I fancied that half the boys in the ward were glaring at it without daring to speak. It was poor C— (who afterwards went mad) gazing at that lunar orb, which might afterwards be supposed to have malignantly fascinated him."

The upper grammar master in the great times of Coleridge, Lamb, and Leigh Hunt, was a cruel pedant named Boyer. He was a good verbal scholar, and a conscientious teacher, but of a hard, passionate nature, ruling by terror, and disdaining love. In one of the many pictures left us of this school in its old days, he is sketched as a short punchy man, with large face and hands, long plebeian upper lip, close cruel piggish eyes, veiled by spectacles, and an aquiline nose. He dressed in black, and wore a powdered wig; his sleeves were short, as if to leave his strong hands more play for flogging, and he wore very tight grey worsted stockings over what Leigh Hunt playfully calls "little balustrade legs." His weak side was carpentering; he generally carried a carpenter's rule in an express side-pocket. His favourite oath of vengeance was, "Odd's my life, sirrah."

"He had two wigs," Lamb says, "both pedantic, but of different shades. The one serene and smiling, fresh powdered, betokening a mild day; the other, an old, discoloured, unkempt, angry caxon, denoting frequent and bloody execution. I have known him double his knotty fist at a poor, trembling child (the maternal milk hardily dry upon its lips), with a 'Sirrah, do you presume to set your wits at me?'"

In gentler moments, when satiated by heavy doses of Latin and much flogging, he was known to whip a boy and read the parliamentary debates at the same time, a paragraph and a lash alternately. When you were out in your lessons, he turned upon you a round, staring, blank eye, like that of a fish, and he had a spiteful way of pinching under the chin, and lifting boys off the ground by the lobes of their ears. Coleridge describes Boyer coming up to him as he was crying, the first day of his return after the holidays, and saying :

"Boy! the school is your father. Boy! the school is your mother. Boy! the school is your brother. The school is your sister. The school is your first cousin, and your second cousin, and all the rest of your relations. Boy! let's have no more crying."

Boyer used to send to Field, the quiet, idle, gentleman-like under-master, to borrow a birch; then remark, with a sardonic grin, to one of his satellites, "How neat and fresh the twigs look." When the tyrant was on his death-bed, Coleridge said of him with droll pity, "May all his faults be forgiven, and may he be wafted to bliss by little cherub boys, all head and wings, that there may be no foundation for future reproach as to his sublunary infirmities." As for the second master, Field, his boys, of whom Lamb was, were happy as birds, and spent their time (for they never got beyond *Phædrus*) in making paper sundials, weaving cat's-crades, playing at French and English, or making peas dance on the end of a tin pipe.

The funerals in the cloisters in Lamb's time must have been very impressive; and Lamb specially mentions the interment of the portly steward Perry, when nearly every one of the five hundred boys wore a black ribbon, or something to denote respect.

Of the greatest of the three great modern worthies of Christ's Hospital, Coleridge, Lamb, and Leigh Hunt, we have a fine Vandyck sketch from the hand of the second. "Come back into memory," says Elia, in one of his noblest and highest moods, "as thou wert in the spring-time of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee, the dark pillar not yet turned—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—logician, metaphysician, bard! How have I seen the casual passer through the cloisters stand still entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the speech and the garb of the young Mirandola), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mys-

teries of Jamblichus or Plotinus (for even in those years that waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar; while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the inspired charity boy! Many were the 'wit combats' (to daily awhile with the words of old Fuller) between him and C. V. Le Grice, which, too, I beheld, like a great Spanish galleon and an English man-of-war." Master Coleridge, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in his performance. C. V. L., like the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention.

Lamb himself, who had left just before Leigh Hunt entered the school, is described by the latter, as seen by him when revisiting the school. His walk was sidling and peculiar, and the boys, susceptible of his quaintness of manner and costume, called him "Guy." Lamb has left two splendid essays on his old school. In one he takes the rose-coloured side, and writes as a rich man's son; in the second, bantering himself, he writes as if poor, and touches on some faults and unhappinesses of the place.

Like Lamb, Leigh Hunt, from having a slight stammer, never rose to be one of the supreme Grecians, and did not, therefore, pass on to the university. He was at Christ's Hospital just the loving, impressionable creature that he afterwards continued—sturdy for the right, devoted in his friendship, and full of sensitive impulses.

Among the contemporaries of Lamb were Thomas Fanshaw Middleton, afterwards the scholarly Bishop of Calcutta; Richards, author of a spirited Oxford prize poem, the *Aboriginal Britons*; Barnes, afterwards editor for so long of the *Times*, a man who, but for dreaming over his glass, might have done greater things.

Nor can we close the list of Leigh Hunt's contemporaries without mentioning that most clever and ingenious scholar, Mitchell, the translator of *Aristophanes*.

There is a curious history attached to the portrait of a Mr. St. Arnaud, the grandfather of a benefactor to the Hospital, which hangs in the treasury. By the terms of St. Arnaud's will, all the money he left passes to the University of Oxford from the Bluecoat School if this picture is ever lost or given away, and the same deprivation occurs if this picture is not produced

once a year at the general court, and also shown, on requisition, to the vice-chancellor of Oxford or his deputy. As the St. Arnauds had intermarried in the Middle Ages with the luckless Stuarts, there is a tradition in the school that this picture is the portrait of the Pretender, but this is an unfounded notion.

GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S NARRATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THAT STATE OF LIFE," &c.

IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VI.

WHAT I had long foreseen came to pass the next day. Mr. Ridgway formally proposed to Assunta; and was rejected. That a man of his acute perceptions should not have been prepared for this result to his wooing seemed difficult to believe. Had Miss Fleming been a different sort of person, it might have been looked for that the disgrace and banishment of Mr. Walbrooke's heir should have inclined her to view with favour a marriage which presented so many solid advantages as the one now offered to her. But Mr. Ridgway was too keen-sighted to misjudge, though he was incapable of valuing at its true worth, the character of the woman whom he now desired to raise to the throne of Hapsbury. She had had a girlish fancy for the "good-looking young calf," who had so signally disgraced himself last night, and she must feel heartily ashamed of him. On the other hand, she had often shown a certain amount of pleasure in his, Mr. Ridgway's, society; it required no uncommon vanity in a man who had cultivated the arts of pleasing for nearly fifty years, to believe that the contrast between coarseness and refinement must make itself felt by Assunta at this moment, very much to the advantage of the latter. As to love, he would probably have smiled sarcastically at the question of its existence, on one side or the other. She was a charming young woman; agreeable and distinguished in person, and sufficiently intelligent to be receptive of his instruction, at such times as he might feel disposed to converse—for your brilliant men of society are apt to be taciturn in strict domesticity. And as to himself, why, he was—what he was; he had never indulged in illusions as to girls falling in love with him, or he might have been captured, ere this, by one of the numerous young ladies who, at various periods of his career, had desired to reign at Hapsbury. Fortunately he did not believe in les grandes passions; in his own

case, at least. No; love was an entirely unnecessary ingredient in the marriage-mixture: liking was a solvent of sufficient strength to melt the harsher quantities of that mixture into a cool and not unpalatable beverage.

Thus, only, could I account for the blunder Mr. Ridgway committed, in believing that he had only to propose to be accepted. He regarded Assunta as too sensible to waste her life on a vain shadow; her eyes had been open to the futility of any expectations she might have formed with regard to Harry: and now that the substantial reality of independence, coupled with an agreeable companion, was offered her, how could she refuse? But she did refuse; much to his surprise, something to his annoyance, and more to his contempt. She had not a philosophic soul; she was no better than other women, then, in this respect, that she allowed an idiotic fancy to usurp the place of some more rational feeling, which was all that philosophy needed to enable two human beings to live placidly together.

He returned to Hapsbury that afternoon, and Assunta was left to the mercy of Mr. Walbrooke. What that mercy was may be gathered from the fact that he was closeted with her for upwards of an hour; after which I was unable to get speech of her, for she pleaded fatigue to retire to her bed. The next morning I received news of my father's serious illness, which called me suddenly to London; but I managed to have a few minutes' conversation alone with Assunta in the library before my departure. She looked sallow and worn, poor child, that morning—the world and Mr. Ridgway would have said almost plain. To me she never seemed more lovable and interesting. She sat down wearily on one of the great leather chairs, and leaned her head on her hand. Then she told me something of what had passed between the master of the house and herself, and of what she felt to be the peculiar and terrible difficulty of her present position.

"He is so kind in his own way—he has been more like a relation to me than a master—that when he tells me how fatal it would be to all his views for Harry that we should marry, I feel as if I were a monster of ingratitude to oppose him. If I could be persuaded that it was really for Harry's benefit to give me up, I would show him the example—cost me what it might, Mr. Luttrell. It is this breaks my heart. I have not slept all night, thinking what I ought to do. Mr. Walbrooke says

I am mistaken in fancying I have much influence over Harry; and, alas! I almost feel as if he were right. I am afraid it cannot be very great, since he can be swept hither and thither by every impulse of the moment. I ask myself, 'Shall I not be as a millstone round his neck? Will the day not come when he will regret having married the penniless foundling?'"

"Never; unless he do so precipitately," I replied at once. "And this I am sure you will not consent to. You have but one course, both of you: to try and wear out the squire's patience. It is a case of two to one; for all this family are so attached to you that I am sure they will not hear of your leaving them."

She coloured, and with a sad little smile said, "Unless it is, as the maids say, 'to better myself,' or what Mr. Walbrooke considers is to better me. For that he is urgent—nay, positively angry at my rejection of wealth and social position. What are they all to me without Harry?"

"Is it final," I asked, "this rejection?"

"Final," she replied; and no more passed between us on the subject. We returned again to Harry. She bitterly deplored his having by this fresh outrage yet further incensed his uncle. "Mr. Walbrooke says that until I marry, or that Harry consents to give me up, he must not return here. That is hard, is it not, Mr. Luttrell? —to separate Harry and his uncle, who has been like a father to him? My darling boy will never give me up, I know that, but I cannot be his ruin—I, who hoped to save him; for it will be ruin if this quarrel between him and his uncle continues. Mr. Walbrooke candidly told me that he would never forgive Harry's marrying against his consent. He said, 'My nephew must marry a woman of some social weight, to lift him up, instead of dragging him down.' It sounds worldly and heartless to me, Mr. Luttrell, but perhaps it is true, for all that. If I only knew what was right. If I only knew what was best for my darling!"

The sad eyes were full of tears, but they did not fall.

"Will you write to me, dear Miss Fleming?" I asked, with as steady a voice as I could command. "I think you know that I am your true friend, as I am Harry's, and that I shall always give you such advice as I should to a dear sister. My last word is, 'Do nothing rashly.'"

She promised to write, and thanked me warmly; then we parted. Nothing could be kinder than Mr. Walbrooke's farewell.

"You must come to us again in June, Luttrell, whether Harry is here or not—whether he is here or *not*," he repeated, doggedly. "The young man's obstinacy is such that unless circumstances occur—which I am hopeful they may—to force him into submission, it is very probable he may continue to put himself into opposition to me. And as long as he does so, he will not come to the Grange. But, remember, we shall be very glad to see you. There is that Sir Joshua, you know, which you have begun to copy—you must return to finish it."

But the copy of Sir Joshua remains unfinished to this day; and, possibly, still adorns some attic at the Grange. I have never seen it or the Grange since that January morning in 1827.

CHAPTER VII.

My poor father's was a long illness, and I was constantly in attendance on him for many weeks. He died in March, and about the same time I learnt, indirectly, that Mr. Fleming was dead, leaving a widow and four children in very poor circumstances. I had received one or two letters from Assunta, giving a sad account of her tormented state of mind, Harry's name being now tabooed in the family circle, all communications between him and the squire being of the briefest and driest character, and Mr. Ridgway being now a more constant guest than ever. Then came an interval when I heard nothing from the Grange, being myself too busily and painfully occupied to write more than the brief announcement of my father's death. I had only one letter from Harry, and that was not very satisfactory. It was, indeed, fuller than ever of his passionate attachment to Assunta; but of this I needed no assurance. I should have been better pleased to learn that it was producing some permanent effect on his life and character; but as to the one he was silent, and that the reckless impetuosity of the other was uncontrolled as ever was clear from the violent terms in which he wrote of his uncle. I had, moreover, the opportunity of learning through a friend, whose brother was at Oxford, that young Walbrooke's efforts at steadiness were spasmodic at best. He belonged to a fast set, and though he sometimes absented himself from their "wines" for a few days, the least vexation, or, it might be, the devil within him, unaided by any circumstance from without, drove him to those festive boards, from which he was

too often seen reeling home in the early morning light.

All this was painful enough to me, and doubly so, as I did not see any hopeful termination to the existing state of things. In April I wrote to Assunta, but of course abstained from any allusion to what I had heard of Harry. I wrote but a few lines, asking for news of her; and some days later I received the following reply.

April 20th, 1827.

DEAR MR. LUTTRELL.—Thank you for your kind letter. We have both had a heavy sorrow since I last wrote to you; added to which I have suffered much in other ways. You ask me to tell you everything about myself, or I should not think of intruding my own troubles upon you so soon. Dear Mr. Luttrell, there are griefs far worse than the death of those we love. Henry's conduct is driving me to despair. He has been sent away from Oxford—"rusticated" I think they call it—for a time, in consequence of some wild outbreaks. What will become of him? The doors of this house, his natural home, are shut against him; he will not go to Lady Arden's, who, it seems, spoke disparagingly of me when he was there in the winter. Alas! you see, on every side, I am the barrier between him and his relations; and Mr. Walbrooke's great kindness to me makes it all the worse. He has given me fifty pounds to send to poor dear Mrs. Fleming, and has promised to pay for little Charlie's schooling. Why cannot he rest satisfied with these acts of true benevolence, without trying to force me into a marriage with one man, while my heart is another's? Dear Mr. Luttrell, I have been so torn asunder by conflicting feelings during the past week, that I scarcely know how I have arrived at the resolution I have formed to leave the Grange, which has been my home for the last five years; to bid it good-bye, probably for ever! A simple stratagem will enable me to do this without proclaiming my real motive. Mrs. Fleming is left in so forlorn and piteous a condition, with her four little children, that it appears natural I should go to her; though I fear that, in point of fact, I shall be more of a burden than a help, and must soon seek another situation. But I shall be no longer in the way here; I know they would never send me from them; but when I am gone, dear Harry can return, and all will then be well, I hope, between him and the squire. I will not tell you what it has cost me to come to this resolve. I know it is *right*,

and that is my only consolation. The alternative was one I could not bring myself to accept. I have said nothing as yet about my plan; I dread all discussion so much, I must speak and act almost simultaneously, for I feel that Mr. Walbrooke will strenuously oppose my going. I cannot bring myself yet to think that all must be at an end between Harry and me; but oh! Mr. Luttrell, if my love should be doing him harm, instead of good! That thought haunts me. I was arrogant enough to hope that I stood between him and much evil. Alas! it is not so, I can deceive myself no longer; God knows what I ought to do; and yet, when I pray for guidance, I seem to get no answer to my prayers. Forgive this.

From yours,
Ever sincerely and gratefully,
ASSUNTA FLEMING.

As I pondered over this letter, I could not but feel that she was right. That her presence at the Grange should prevent Harry's return there, was clearly not defensible, not even politic. When she was really gone, when they had lost the charm of her gracious presence, they would, perhaps, understand her true worth better, and feel how inexpressibly lucky Harry was to have gained the heart of such a woman. They, or rather the squire, for Mrs. Walbrooke was of no account in this calculation, might gradually be brought to see that Harry's real welfare was dependent on this marriage. It was of importance that he should be at the Grange now, out of the reach of temptations to which he was constantly falling a prey, in his present condition of passionate, irritable, unsatisfied love. I believed that, on the whole, Assunta's resolution was wise, with a view to the ultimate happiness of both.

That same afternoon, as I was painting, and wondering what had become of Harry, he walked in, looking, to my surprise, in better spirits than I could have expected; but such was the quicksilver of his nature; to rise—and fall as rapidly—with the varying temperature of his hopes. I saw at once that he did not know of Assunta's leaving the Grange.

"I have been too down in the mouth, lately, to write to you, Geoff; but you'll forgive me, eh? I am sent from Oxford for the remainder of this term, for being in a row; but we won't talk about disagreeable things. Don't look so grave—I couldn't help it—I couldn't, indeed. And good comes out of evil sometimes. I have got a

stroke of luck which will make me independent of the squire, I hope, and then I can marry Assunta to-morrow."

He rubbed his hands with a boyish glee, and his whole face beamed.

"Independent of your uncle!" I repeated. "What do you mean? How on earth can good come of the evil of disgracing yourself at Oxford?"

"Well, in this way, Geoff. The fellow with whom I got into this row—indeed, I might say, who got me into this row, and who was leaving Oxford this term, so he didn't care for himself—is the son of a Scotch wine merchant in the City. He is a thundering good fellow, and when he heard say that I couldn't go to the Grange, he insisted on my coming to stay at his father's here in London. On our way up I told him something of my position, and said I would do anything in the world that would give me a small, certain independence. He came to me last night, and said he had been talking to his father, who offered to take me into the house, and give me three hundred a year. My work would be chiefly to *tout*—to go among my friends, and try to get orders. I was a little staggered at first. It isn't the kind of thing I've been used to, but—"

"I should think not! And for a wine merchant, too! the last trade of all others, Harry, you should have anything to do with. You are ill-fitted in every way for this kind of life. I hope you will not think of it."

"Indeed, but I do, though. I have made up my mind to accept Mr. Strahan's offer. There's no disgrace in 'touting,' Geoff?"

"I don't say that there is any disgrace, but I know that your uncle would never forgive you. It would be the most suicidal step you could take; and when I say that, Harry, I mean something more than as regards your worldly prospects. You know your own fatal tendency—you will be constantly exposed to the temptation of 'tasting' wines, and not even Assunta's influence, I fear, will counterbalance this."

"I know myself better than you do, Geoff," he said, colouring. "I don't drink when I am happy. I drink when I am dispirited—I drink from a craving for excitement—to drown thought. When I have my darling for my own, when no one can separate us, I shall want nothing else, neither drink nor any other excitement."

I brought forward every argument I could to move him from his purpose; and a great many bad ones among the number: to wit, that Mr. Strahan only wanted

Harry's name to widen, and, it might be, to raise the Strahan connexion: that this was not honest work, which I always respected, but the base letting out on hire of a social influence to advance the interests of a trade. To which, of course, the rejoinder was, that Mr. Strahan's motives were nothing to Harry; and that as long as he could honestly recommend the wine, he saw no reason why he should not do so as generally as possible. Then I pointed out that it was impossible he could support a wife upon three hundred a year.

"I have a hundred and fifty of my own," he replied, "if my uncle were to take from me every farthing; which, for Assunta's sake, I hardly think he would do."

In short, he was so full of the scheme that nothing I could say made the smallest impression. Poor boy! His exhilaration lasted but a few hours. The day but one after this he rushed into my room, early in the morning, with a letter in his hand. He was pale with excitement, his passionate nostrils dilated, his lips quivering. He neither shook my hand nor spoke a word of greeting; he only held out the letter, and said in a hoarse voice:

"Read that."

I saw at once that it was from Assunta; but I was far from guessing its contents. Here is the letter itself, which fell into my hands years after. The paper is yellow; the ink is faded, but the pure and noble spirit breathes through it fresh as when those words were written.

April 22nd, 1829.

MY OWN DEAREST HARRY,—I sit down with a sorrowful heart, knowing that what I have to write will give you great pain. Ever since we parted, Harry, nearly four months ago, there has been a conflict in me, between my own selfish love, and a growing fear—a growing belief, that it was best for you that all between us should be at an end. If I could think, as I once did, that by ever being your wife I should do you more good than I could bring you harm, nothing should have shaken me. But, alas! dearest Harry, I have been shaken. I do not reproach you; I would not willingly add one pang to your sorrow, dear. I know that women cannot judge of men's temptations. All I mean is, that the existing state of things seems to be doing you injury in all ways, as regards your family, as regards your career, as regards your own self, which is far worse than all. I have not the power to guard you from this last evil, which would be my

only justification for severing you from your home, and for allowing you to sacrifice all your worldly prospects. Your uncle, whose character you scarcely understand as well as I do, in spite of all his great kindness to me, will *never* be reconciled to our marriage. Your youth would be wasted in pursuit of a dream, if you waited for his consent; if we married without it, Mr. Walbrooke would disinherit you at once. He has told me this himself. It would be mere sentimentality to pretend that such would not be a great misfortune to one bred up as you have been. But, as regards myself, there might be a yet worse misfortune. If you should not have strength to support poverty, Harry; if it should happen that, in order to drown your cares, you lowered morally, under my eyes, day by day; if the time ever came when I felt that you reproached me, in your heart, with being the cause of your degradation—I think I should kill myself. I could never survive the agony of such a thought as that. And therefore, dearest, I have been brought, with many bitter tears, to believe that everything between us had best be—I will not say *forgotten*, perhaps that is impossible, but, at an end. I am leaving this house, which has been my home for five years, to-morrow morning. You must not think I am driven away. Mr. Walbrooke has opposed my departure by every means in his power; but my eyes have been opened to see what is right. When I am gone, you will return to your natural home; for you must let no foolish resentment now prevent a reconciliation with your uncle. Oh! my darling, do not think too harshly of me for breaking my word; you would not, if you knew all I had suffered. This is the last time I shall ever write to you, and there is something still at my heart which I would add. It is this. Although we are parted for ever in this world, I shall be comparatively happy in my obscurity if I hear of you as beloved and respected. I shall glory in your honour, dearest Harry. I shall die in your shame.

ASSUNTA.

P.S. I am going to poor Mrs. Fleming. She has moved into the country.

I had walked to the window to read this letter, and I remained there, with my back

to Harry, unable to speak for some minutes after I had finished and refolded it. Noble heart! What would I not have given for such love! Was it all to be wasted? I felt more bitter towards Harry at that moment than I had ever done before.

It was he who broke silence at last.

"They have driven her to it, Geoff, and, by Heaven, I'll never forgive them."

"And you, Harry? Have you only reproaches for others and none for yourself?"

"Can't you see, man," he rejoined fiercely, "that I'm half mad with remorse without my saying so? But it isn't that. Though she thinks me such a reprobate, she would never have given me up (she hasn't now, in her heart) if they hadn't persuaded her it was for my good. But they will find themselves mistaken. She may write what she likes; I shall never give her up. And I'll be hanged if I go back to the Grange."

"What do you mean to do, then?"

"Go in for the wine business. I'm more determined than ever now. I shall cut Oxford, and am going to write to the squire to tell him so."

"You will only grieve Assunta by doing all this, Harry."

"I can't help it, Geoff; it is his doing. I'll be independent somehow, I'm resolved; and so my darling girl shall know. What do I care for his money compared with her? I shall tell her that nothing she can say makes any difference. She is mine, and I am hers, until she marries another man—and the squire may leave his property to whom he likes."

All argument was useless; I went over the old ground again and again, but to no purpose; he was resolutely set against "cringing" to the squire, as he called it, and declared that he couldn't sit at meat with him, feeling as he did at present. Had he known where to find Assunta, I believe he would have set off that night. As it was, he wrote to her, directing his letter to the Grange, to be forwarded; and he wrote likewise to his uncle.

On MONDAY, the 4th of DECEMBER,

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FOR CHRISTMAS,**

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